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OPTOMETRY AND VISION SCIENCE
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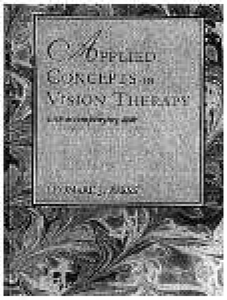
BOOK REVIEWS

Applied Concepts in Vision Therapy—With Accompanying Disk



Leonard J. Press, editor. St. Louis, Mosby-Year Book. 1997. Pages: 367 + index + 4 pages of colored plates. Price: $89.95. ISBN: 0815167296.

This book provides detailed information on the clinical practice of optometric vision therapy. It is divided into 5 sections: (1) Foundations of Vision Therapy, 6 chapters, 74 pages; (2) Diagnostic and Therapeutic Guidelines, 8 chapters, 112 pages; (3) Procedures in Vision Therapy, 8 chapters, 120 pages; (4) Practice Management and Administration, 3 chapters, 34 pages; and (5) Appendices, 10 appendices, 22 pages. The eight chapters in the Diagnostic and Therapeutic Guidelines section and the eight chapters in the Procedures in Vision Therapy section are devoted to eight topics: amblyopia, strabismus, nonstrabismic accommodation and vergence disorders, oculomotor dysfunctions, developmental information processing disorders, acquired information processing disorders (closed head trauma), sports vision, and myopia control. Most of the chapters were written by the editor, Leonard Press. Other contributing authors wrote chapters in areas in which they are active clinically. Most of the authors wrote are Fellows of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD), and they have been strongly influenced by the literature of the COVD and the Optometric Extension Program (OEP).

The strengths of the book are its unique elements. There is an interesting chapter on the historical development of vision therapy (VT) and the activities of the OEP and COVD in VT. There is an excellent chapter on application of learning theory to VT. There is also an important chapter on ocular and neurological diseases which can masquerade as functional vision disorders. The book contains material on VT practice administration and organization, as well as interprofessional and intraprofessional relations. It deals in a straightforward fashion with the problem of ophthalmologists who denigrate VT as practiced by optometrists.

The second and third sections of the book cover all of the major applications of optometric VT. They offer some background and diagnostic guidelines. These sections emphasize practical therapy guidelines and procedures, which may be extremely useful to clinicians. The coverage is not comprehensive nor does it attempt to critically review supporting literature. Tables, figures, and summary boxes are used effectively in these chapters. Perhaps some additional figures could have been included to enhance description of some therapy procedures. Most of the appendices are practice management materials. One of the appendices is a reprint of the 1988 American Optometric Association special report on the efficacy of optometric VT.

The book does not contain enough basic information on the conditions discussed to make it useful as a sole textbook in an introductory VT course. However, it would be valuable in a second or advanced course. Practitioners who wish to add a strong VT component to their practices or who wish to specialize in VT should find it very helpful, as would optometrists in binocular vision or pediatrics residency programs.

The text is accompanied by a 3½″ computer disk which contains 22 text files related to VT. The disk is in IBM format; however, the files are in "RTF" (rich text format). This file format allows the files to be opened by most standard word processing programs, on either an IBM-compatible or a Macintosh computer. However, because the disk itself is in IBM format, in order to use the disk on a Macintosh, the computer must be specially hardware- or software-configured to accept IBM-compatible disks. Most newer Macintosh computers already are or can easily be so configured. The disk will easily work in an IBM-compatible computer with a 386 CPU or better.

Two of the files on the disk contain explanatory information and instructions about using the disk, and the rest consist of a collection of forms, letters, instruction sheets, and patient information handouts. Any practitioner who has encountered negative opinions from ophthalmologists regarding VT, denial of claims from third party plans, or parental confusion regarding VT procedures or effectiveness, will find the correspondence provided by Dr. Press helpful in addressing those situations. As indicated in the text description of the computer disk, doctors "may handle encounters of this type in a different manner, or a different tone," and, indeed, many may find the very direct approach used by Dr. Press in his letters to be quite unlike their own. However, these letters provide the practitioner with useful guidance when dealing with similar situations. Also included are letters to pediatricians, referring optometrists, and school officials, as well as summaries of patients for whom VT was not recommended, or is not being pursued for financial reasons.

The disk contains several clinic forms related to VT. A VT session form, an asthenopia questionnaire, pre- and post-VT surveys, and a VT financial agreement are among the examples of forms that practitioners can find on the disk, and can modify for their use.

Perhaps the most useful text file on this disk is the very complete listing and description of VT procedures. This file provides detailed instructions that can be printed and given to patients so that they understand the assigned tasks. The procedures are clearly written and should be easily understood by patients. Developing original versions of such instruction sheets is a difficult and time consuming task, and this file can be easily edited to fit the prac-

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titioner's therapy mode and philosophy. Such instruction handouts can be very helpful in encouraging compliance with training procedures. This computer file is 68 pages long and took over 1 minute to open with a Macintosh PowerPC computer. The user may wish to edit and save each procedure in a separate file.

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Self-Esteem and Adjusting with Blindness: The Process of Responding to Life's Demands, 2nd ed.

Dean W. Tuttle and Naomi R. Tuttle. Springlfield, IL, Charles C. Thomas. 1996. Pages: 264. Price: $54.95 cloth, $37.95 paper. ISBN: 0398065977.

The authors' stated purpose in this book is to analyze blindness within the context of two overlapping constructs: the development of self-esteem and the process of adjusting to social and/or physical trauma. Although the original edition was designed as a text for graduate students working with the visually impaired, this new second edition can benefit all professionals interested in the adjustment of individuals confronted with a major life crisis.

The book is enlivened by anecdotes from over 60 blind and visually impaired people whose personal experiences highlight the authors' main subjects—the definition of blindness, the development of self-esteem, adjusting with blindness, and fostering self-esteem. For example, one person reflected on their difficulty in adjusting to blindness. "My lifestyle snailed to slow motion. I felt stunned, resisting what I should do. I was shifted out of the fast lane to a rest stop. I needed time to regroup and rebuild. I felt confident that I would eventually become the capable, competent person I once was and on occasion still felt I was."

The authors begin with a brief historical overview of blindness and the functional and emotional implications of being blind or visually impaired. Theories of self-esteem development are reviewed, but the main focus of the text is described by the authors' second title: *The Process of Responding to Life's Demands.* The authors emphasize that there is no single blind persona. Rather, personal characteristics and external influences govern how each person will adjust to visual impairment.

Professionals dealing with the visually impaired will be particularly interested in the well defined model of the phases of adjustment to blindness in Chapter 7. These are similar to Kubler-Ross' stages of grief, which focus on the psychological stages individuals experience when adjusting to a major life trauma. Successful professional intervention is best geared to the person's specific stage of adjustment. Intervention strategies or support from families and caregivers must understand and address the person's stage of adjustment: "trauma," "shock and denial," "mourning and withdrawal," "succumbing and depression," "reassessment and reaffirmation," "coping and mobilization," and "acceptance." An adolescent's poem expresses his frustrations when in "mourning and withdrawal":

> "I wish I was an apple
> Hanging from a tree;
> I wish I was most anything
> Except a boy like me."

Movement through the stages is not always sequential or smooth, and it can take a great deal of time, support, and understanding for a person to reach the stage of self-acceptance.

The authors explain how significant others can help facilitate the blind person's progress toward self-acceptance by understanding the stages and giving positive, appropriate intervention at each stage. Then acceptance can be achieved.

"It turned out to be a matter of years before blindness—hers, mine, all of ours—became, quite simply, the inability to see with our eyes, nothing more."

Finally, the Tuttles put theory into practice with creative and practical exercises which professionals can use to nurture self-esteem in their clients. The important role of the family and professionals completes this thorough and well formulated text.

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